

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**September 22, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for Research and Development for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). I am excited about the opportunity to enter public service, to work with Administrator Johnson and to advance the mission of EPA. I am also proud to introduce my wife Ann and my two children, Owen and Evelyn, who are here with me today.

I am a scientist and I have spent my career working to apply the principles of science, quantitative analysis and risk communication in public health. My interests have always been with the application of science, putting knowledge to work to help make better decisions. This interest led me to graduate study in toxicology, the science that helps us identify and characterize human health and environmental hazards. Next, I was awarded a fellowship in the Interdisciplinary Programs in Health at the Harvard School of Public Health where I learned about the range of scientific data and knowledge needed to inform important decisions. I also saw how important careful consideration and characterization of scientific information is in public health. I have studied and taught this approach at the Harvard School of Public Health for over 15 years. I believe that my training and experience will enhance my ability to work with the dedicated scientists and professionals in ORD to advance its charge of providing scientific and technological support for EPA's activities.

My work over the last 20 years has been, like the task of the ORD, both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The ORD conducts research and analyses on a wide range of potential hazards from the health and ecological effects of biological and chemical hazards to water quality to homeland security. It takes the range of expertise in ORD, including biologists, engineers, physical scientists, mathematicians and physicians, to understand and characterize risk management solutions. I believe that more and more our environmental challenges will require cooperation and collaboration among scientific disciplines.

My approach to addressing important public health and environmental concerns is to bring together the best information and people, from multiple disciplines, to provide an integrative solution. For example, I led the Harvard/Tuskegee BSE (Mad Cow) study commissioned by the USDA in 1998. Our goal was an evaluation of the potential for BSE to spread in the United States if it were introduced. This project involved integration of expertise from many disciplines from veterinary science to neurobiology to applied mathematics. It required collaboration with governments (US and abroad), industry, and non-governmental organizations. Ultimately, our study provided useful information to inform policy decisions,

guide research, and communicate BSE risk to the public. This spirit of integration and collaboration will guide my efforts at ORD.

The EPA Office of Research and Development is organized around the risk assessment/risk management paradigm. I have extensive knowledge of risk assessment and the careful evaluation of science that is critical for sound decisions about human health and the environment. This understanding has given me opportunities to contribute to the interaction of science and government decision-making while serving on the National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council, the advisory body to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Food and Drug Administration's Food Advisory Committee, Contaminants and Natural Toxicants Subcommittee.

I am also a teacher and proud of my contribution to educating current and future environmental professionals. Doctoral students whom I have advised and students from my classes have gone on to work in academia, government, and the private sector. Several come from or joined the EPA, including the National Center for Environmental Assessment and Region V. Since 1995 I have developed and directed a mid-career short course on risk that regularly has a dozen or more class members from EPA with participants from FDA, USDA, NRC, and OSHA and numerous foreign countries. The rigor, balance, and practicality that characterize this course are the same attributes that will guide my efforts at ORD.

Teaching is also about communicating, and I believe that communication is key to successful leadership, research, analysis, and protection of human health and the environment. I will strive to work with all of ORD's stakeholders to identify important issues and their scientific basis, to build understanding of ORD's mission and actions, and to get useful scientific information into the hands of decision makers. These stakeholders include legislators, the public, other parts of the government, the scientific community, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.

ORD has a critical responsibility in EPA's mission and, if confirmed, I will bring enthusiasm, knowledge and experience to supporting that role. At the same time, I will bring a fresh perspective to helping advance Administrator Steve Johnson's goals of using the best available scientific information to make decisions and working collaboratively to find effective solutions to environmental problems.

Thank you very much for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.